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Inside Information

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NEW FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REGULATIONS

For the first time in over 10 years, USDA has new regulations governing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Months in the making, the regulations establish Departmentwide policy, procedures, and responsibilities for the implementation and coordination of the Act in each agency, through which any person may request agency documents.

In addition to furnishing guidance to the agencies on processing and responding to FOI requests and appeals, the regulations also provide specific information pertinent to documents in the Office of the Secretary and the Office of Governmental and Public Affairs (OGPA).

OGPA has the primary administrative responsibility for the Act in USDA. Revised in the Special Programs Division of OGPA's Office of Information, the regulations were published as a final rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER (51 FR 32189), and become effective October 10.

For further information, contact Milton Sloane, (202) 447-8164, or Dialcom mailbox AGR206.

HAVE CAMERA, WILL TRAVEL AND SHOOT!

The Video and Film Division of USDA's Office of Information recently completed several tapings in various locations.

Ron Hamilton worked in Missoula, Montana, on a Forest Service (FS) videotape on "Facilities Management," designed to explain a new FS facilities maintenance and management program.

Warren Phipps videotaped scenes in Washington's Rock Creek Park and within USDA for a FS video training presentation that will guide employees on the use of a handbook on "Natural Resources and Environmental Education."

Linwood Jones, along with Radio-TV Division's Vic Powell, worked in the Chicago area taping scenes of grain storage, grain loading on barges, and corn harvesting.

Jones also accompanied Radio-TV's George Holmes to Arizona, and into a National Forest near Redding, California, to visit an illegal marijuana plantation. Holmes was gathering stories for both radio and television.

NAL HOLDS TELECONFERENCE WORKSHOP

An hour-long audio teleconference was recently held for 30 staff members of the National Agricultural Library (NAL). It included an audio conference demonstration session that connected NAL with key librarian contacts at the Illinois and Georgia universities.

4-H TASK FORCE DISCUSS USING VIDEO

The National 4-H Task Force met recently to discuss how video can be used with the 4-H curriculum. Larry Quinn, of Video and Film Division of USDA's Office of Information, was invited to assist in the project and Eleanor Wilson of the Extension Service 4-H staff coordinated the discussions.

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Items developed during the session included a comprehensive list of the advantages for using video to communicate the 4-H information, and anticipated uses for both adult leaders and 4-H members.

A report was presented to State 4-H leaders throughout the nation at their meeting last week in Washington, D.C.

USDA ADMINISTRATIVE PRINTING DISCUSSED

The Publishing and Printing Divisions' staffs of USDA's Office of Information have agreed on the need for close monitoring of all administrative printing jobs from USDA agencies to make sure they constitute administrative publications and not public information documents.

According to Publishing Division Chief Ed Poe, some agencies frequently specify that their printing requests are for administrative printing when the document to be printed is for public distribution.

An administrative document is for the nonpublic -- USDA personnel and official cooperators who need the information to carry out their program responsibilities. (Borrowers and other recipients of USDA services are not included as cooperators.)

Materials for internal use (nonpublic information) include manuals of instructions for internal use only by USDA employees, directories of agency personnel for administrative purposes, employee newsletters focusing on agency policy and announcements for use of employees only, regulations or directives governing USDA employees only, preliminary reports and drafts of manuscripts distributed for review purposes, and annual reports of agencies or group directors intended strictly for distribution to personnel within an agency.

Administrative documents are usually unnumbered, or carry a special number unrelated to USDA or agency series.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST NEEDED BY APHIS

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has an opening for a GS-1035-7, public affairs specialist to write news releases, fact sheets, feature articles, pamphlets, and other materials to increase public understanding to a variety of audiences.

For further information on Announcement No. W-675-86, contact: USDA, APHIS, WPS, 14th & Independence Ave., S.W., Room 1139-S, Washington, DC 20250, or telephone (202) 382-1364. Closing date is October 20.

WORLD FOOD DAY OBSERVANCES

Since 1981, World Food Day has been observed each October 16, the anniversary of the Food and Agriculture Organization's founding. Each year FAO sponsors a different theme on a particular aspect of hunger for World Food Day's effort to mobilize and sustain interest and support in overcoming hunger and poverty. Individual countries may feature their own themes as does the U.S.

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The 1986 FAO theme is "Fishermen and Fishing Communities," and there will be many observances throughout the world.

Penn State University and the State College community are joining forces to present a series of programs on hunger in Africa and at home. For more information on the Penn State program, contact Harry Weaverling, Penn State Continuing Education at (814) 865-3443.

In Washington, D.C., there will be ongoing programs October 14-18. On October 14, the Agency for International Development's Presidential "World Without Hunger" awards will be presented at the State Department.

The U.S. Government's official commemoration of World Food Day will be held on October 16, at 10 a.m., in the Patio of USDA's Administration Building, and will feature Secretary of Agriculture Richard E. Lyng and Alan I. Keyes, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

For further information contact: Larry Marton, Special Programs Division, Office of Information, USDA, (202) 447-5163, or Vic Muniec, Office of International Cooperation and Development, USDA, (202) 382-8041.

DOING PSA'S? GRAB 'EM IN FIRST 4 SECONDS

That's the message of Gary Garner, who runs the high-rolling savings bond public service announcement (PSA) campaign at the U.S. Treasury Department. Garner said we all compete with 200 PSA's each month. To get used, yours must be "better." But how?

Garner said you've got to say something in the first four seconds that will grab your audience. Then hit them with your basic message. Look for new strategies to compete. Consider your audience, its age, socio-economic niche, the profession of the people you're trying to reach.

Garner spoke October 10, at one of a series of monthly workshops staged by Agricultural Communicators in Education at the USDA in Washington, D.C. Dwight Treadway, of Soil Conservation Service, chaired the workshop, available to others sites by audio teleconference. Betty Fleming, ACE-DC Region president, provided teleconference technical support.

Some other tips by Garner: If you've got only 30 seconds, whittle down all the things you'd like to say into one thing you've got to say and let your audience walk away with that. Do research. Ask people you're trying to reach what they think you should say to get your message across. Learn what they'll tune into and what they'll tune out.

PSA radio station directors say if its local and talks to my people, I'll play yours first, Garner said. The more you can make the PSA director feel you've tailored it to him, the better chance you've got. Also, consider the programming the station does, the type of music it plays, and the geography it sits in. Garner covers 7,500 stations with four national spots a year.

Make your packaging attractive. About 75 percent of radio stations want PSA's on record, the rest reel-to-reel, and include a printed script. Use an attractive record jacket, one that shows the product you're selling and the theme your message uses.

Use the PSA director's name when you can. Buy up-to-date mailing lists rather than keeping your own. If you can get a field office to deliver the PSA personally, that helps ensure success. Phone calls and personal visits to discuss the needs of the station help.

Do campaigns that are connected if you can. Play off current themes, such as baseball, radio, television, music, holidays, and political campaigns.

Always include a "pull date" in big red letters, Garner said. And don't do things that get you in trouble with the taxpayers who may say you're wasting their money.

USDA CONSERVATION INFORMATION TEAM FORMED

A USDA Conservation Information Team was formed recently at the direction of Deputy Secretary Peter C. Myers in response to recommendations of a national conservation information and education advisory conference.

The team, made up of top information and conservation technicians from all agencies involved in implementing the conservation provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill, is meeting for hours each day.

This accelerated campaign seeks to inform every farmer and landowner of all the implications affecting them that are contained in the new conservation laws.

The team will be working with USDA's state and county Food & Agriculture Councils as well as interested outside groups to accomplish its goals. Fred Deneke, Extension Service forester, chairs the team. The group's activity is being guided by an Executive Committee of the four USDA assistant secretaries whose agencies are involved.

USDA TELECONFERENCE ACTIVITIES UPDATE

Betty Fleming, teleconference coordinator with the Video and Film Division of USDA's Office of Information; along with associate Dave Smyth, held an open house recently for audio conference users and potential users to discuss ways to get maximum use from conferencing services. Twenty representatives were present.

A videotape on teleconferencing is being funded by the USDA's Extension Service, and will be used for a national workshop along with live audio conferencing. The completed videotape will be sent to 30 or more states with other resource materials.

Scenes of bridge operations and comments by Fleming were videotaped for two workshops scheduled for November 6 and December 1. Fleming will be the key resource person on tape and live by audio conference.

Audio conferences totaled 193 in the fourth quarter of FY 1986, compared to 37 in the first quarter. That's a record, according to Larry Quinn, chief of the Video and Film Division.

SPANISH LANGUAGE DIETARY GUIDELINES

USDA's Spanish-language version of Home and Garden Bulletin No. 232, "Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans," has been re-released.

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Like its English-language counterpart, "Alimentacion y salud: Guia para su dieta," provides information on how to choose and prepare foods based on the best nutrition information available.

Phil Villa-Lobos, with USDA's Office of Information, and Johna Pierce of USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service, delivered copies of the booklet to various Hispanic media, including UPI Spanish Radio Service, NUESTRO magazine and the Spanish International Network which includes more than 200 TV stations.

For further information, contact Johna Pierce at (301) 436-8617, or Phil Villa-Lobos at (202) 447-4026.

MARYLAND RECEIVES GRANT FOR MUSEUM EXHIBIT

The University of Maryland has received a Kellogg Foundation grant to design, develop, and construct a museum exhibit to open in 1987, the centennial year of the Hatch Act.

The exhibit, entitled "The Search for Life: Agricultural Science in the Twentieth Century," will be designed to show consumers how agricultural research helps save money at the supermarket, as well as improving their health and lifestyles. Its primary focus will be on the biochemical revolution, the contribution that science makes to agriculture, and, through agriculture, to American well-being, according to Raymond J. Miller, Vice President of Agricultural Affairs at the University of Maryland.

Dr. G. T. Sharrer, curator of the Smithsonian's division of agriculture and natural resources, says, "When visitors exit the exhibit, they will see dwarf trees, computers at work, and other tools of modern agricultural research. And if they ask what the food source of the twenty-first century will be, they will know that it will be discovered through research."

After traveling to American cities in 1987, the exhibit will be permanently housed in the Smithsonian Institution.

JOURNALISTS' CONFERENCES IN PLANNING

Sally Katt, of the Special Programs Division and Marci Hilt, of the News Division, in USDA's Office of Information, have been feverishly working on plans and logistics of the upcoming regional journalists' conferences in New York and Los Angeles. The New York conference will be held October 30-31, and the Los Angeles conference will be held November 13-14.

Katt is working with the Extension Service, the Food and Drug Administration, and News Division's Kate Alfriend to call many of the invited journalists to remind them about the conferences. She also has asked for help from public affairs officers of the California Department of Agriculture and the California Farm Bureau. About 140 persons have registered for the New York sessions so far, and about 25 have registered for the Los Angeles sessions.

For more information or registration, contact: Marci Hilt, News Division, OI, (202) 447-4026. Dialcom AGR006.

NATIONAL AG LIBRARY PLANS OPEN HOUSE

USDA's National Agricultural Library will be hosting an open house from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on November 20.

Visitors will have a chance to see a wide selection of user services and demonstrations of new technology, such as, the laser video disk, expert system, nursery and seed catalog database, and feed composition databank.

Coordinators of ten subject information centers will be available to talk about the centers: Alternative Farming Systems, Animal Welfare, Aquaculture, Biotechnology, Critical Agricultural Materials, Family, Fiber, Food and Nutrition, Food Irradiation, and Horticulture.

NAL, located in Beltsville, Maryland, will have staff available to discuss current and future services.

For further information, contact Robert Butler, Education and Information Staff, (301) 344-3937, or Dialcom mailbox AGS3062.

NAL WILL SPONSOR AGRICOLA/CRIS TRAINING

USDA's National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, Maryland, will offer a training course on its master database, AGRICOLA and CRIS. The course will be held October 20-23, 1986; and in 1987, on January 26-29; March 9-12; May 4-7; June 22-25; and September 14-17.

This is a basic course for those with little or no experience in online searching. The DIALOG system will be used during the training sessions.

The course is free to employees of USDA, the land grant universities and colleges, and employees of other Federal, state, and local agencies.

To attend a course, submit a request on letterhead stationery to: Farming and Forestry Reference Branch, NAL, Room 111, ATTN: Charles N. Bebee, Beltsville, MD 20705. Requests should be submitted at least 10 days before the course date.

For further information, call (301) 344-3704, or Dialcom mailbox AGS3076.

MICHIGAN STATE PUBLISHES FLOOD TABLOID

Michigan State University's Cooperative Extension Service Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Information Services has published a 16-page newspaper tabloid, "Flood Survival," to help Michigan's farmers cope with the state's worst flooding and continuous wet weather in 500 years.

The publication focuses on stress reduction, crop salvaging and equipment retrofitting, crop mold and disease problems and what to do about them, and livestock care and feeding. It contains a directory for assistance from state and local agencies.

The publication was produced in cooperation with campus-based and Cooperative Extension Service field staff members, Michigan Farm Bureau's Department of Information Services, the state offices of USDA's Farmers Home Administration, the American Red Cross, the Michigan Department of Agriculture, and Consumers Power Company (Michigan's largest utility).

The tabloid was primarily distributed through county Extension offices with assistance from Michigan Farm Bureau county offices, USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, and Soil Conservation Service local offices. Distribution of 75,000 copies began on Oct. 17.

Another tabloid for late winter is being considered because of the severe ramifications the aftermath of the flooding are apt to hold for many farmers.

Contents of the publication may be applicable to other states where flooding and wet weather has taken its toll on crops and families.

For further information or a copy of the tabloid, write to: Bob Neumann, Jr., Media Relations, ANR Information Services, 17 Morrill Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1036, or call (517) 355-2286.

TEXAS COMMUNICATOR PUBLISHES SUMMARY

John Suddath, public information director for the Texas Forest Service, has written an article about "Accessing the Information Utilities." The article was carried in the Oct. 1 issue of Netweaver newsletter available through NewsNet.

Suddath's article summarizes information about a number of on-line services including Dialcom Incorporated, GTE's Telemail, Nexis/Lexis, Dialog, BRS, CompuServe, The Source, GE's GENIE, and, of course, NewsNet, operated by Independent Publishers Co. of Bryn Mawr, Pa. He says the Encyclopedia of Information Systems lists more than 6,000 public databases.

Dialcom's services are described in one paragraph by Suddath, who points out that Dialcom is the primary supplier to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other federal agencies.

He ends his Netweaver article with the paragraph: "It's a big world out there, and floods of information are available in electronic form. I recommend Alfred Glossbrenner's 'The Complete Handbook of Personal Computer Communications' as a readable summary of all the current services."

Suddath is a member of ACE (Agricultural Communicators in Education) and may be reached electronically through his ACE Dialcom mailbox--AGC016--or by calling 409-845-2641, or sending a message old fashioned way to him at the Texas Forest Service, College Station, TX 77843.

OPENINGS FOR WRITER-EDITORS IN FMHA

USDA's Farmers Home Administration has two openings for GS-1082-7/9/11 Writer-Editors (Announcement No. 86-62N).

Responsibilities would include writing substantive and controversial Farmer Program materials and other internal writing assignments. Also, assistance in writing regulations, procedures, and guidelines.

Specialized experience in writing or editing articles, speeches, pamphlets, or other published materials for GS-11.

Contact: Ann Jordan, USDA, Farmers Home Administration, Personnel Division, Room 6900-S, Washington, DC 20250, or telephone (202) 382-1158.

Closing date is November 7.
